International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society
https://doi.org/10.1007/s10767-024-09483-4

Raymond Aron's Sociology of Collaborators, 1940–1944

Elias Forneris[1,2]

Accepted: 22 July 2024

Abstract
Raymond Aron (1904–1983) was one of the most renowned French intellectuals of the twentieth century. Eighty years after the Second World War, the scholarship is incomplete on his management of *La France libre* in wartime Britain (1940–1944). While his contributions to sociology in the 1930s and post-war have been established, this study examines his contributions to sociology during the war in the first volume of his articles '*From the Armistice to the National Insurrection*'. Adopting an interdisciplinary approach in intellectual history and sociology, this study closely reads Aron's articles, placing them in the context of his Interwar research on German sociology and the context of Free France in wartime London. It identifies the sociological methods Aron employed to typologize the backgrounds and motives of prominent French collaborators of Nazi Germany and deduces where his writings situated him politically. Aron's sociology of collaborators yielded a classification of two categories—*integral* and *opportunistic* collaborators. His methods evoked Simmel's systematic sociology and Weber's historical causality. His articles had nuanced political implications: he was firmly against collaboration, but he hoped opportunistic collaborators would still rally the resistance in the early stages of the war. Aron's classification stands the test of time, but more importantly, his sociological method was unique to him. Furthermore, his theoretical interpretations—formulated with limited knowledge, resources, and next to no hindsight—prefigured well-known theories by Jean-Paul Sartre and Simon Epstein. His political position demarcated him from other "Gaullists" without excluding him from broader Gaullism.

Keywords Raymond Aron · Second world war · France · Collaboration · Scholars in exile · Sociology

Dr Rin Ushiyama was the acting editor for this article.

✉ Elias Forneris
epf24@cam.ac.uk; eliasfor@gmail.com

[1] Jesus College, Jesus Lane, CB5 8BL Cambridge, United Kingdom

[2] Faculty of History, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, United Kingdom

Published online: 21 August 2024

Introduction

The French intellectual Raymond Aron (1905–1983) was a versatile political thinker who consistently returned to sociology. Aron's first forays into sociology in the 1930s and his authoritative contributions to sociology after the Second World War are both well-documented. Yet, caught in between, his sociological contributions from the Second World War remain unstudied. Aron published these writings from exile in London while editing the journal *La France libre* between 1940 and 1944.

Grouped, Aron's wartime sociological contributions amounted to what one may call a "sociology of collaborators". To demonstrate it, this study will recapitulate his claims that specific sociological characteristics were attributable to two categories of prominent French collaborators of Nazi Germany during the Second World War: *integral* and *opportunistic* collaborators. His classification was perceptive, not least for an inquiry into an opaque, rapidly evolving contemporary phenomenon occurring abroad. In some ways, it prefigured prominent theories by Jean-Paul Sartre and Simon Epstein about the backgrounds and motives of collaborators. Simultaneously, this study will address where Aron's writings placed him in political terms: while he firmly condemned collaboration, he hoped to attract some of the opportunistic *Vichystes* to resist in the early stages of the war, separating him from General de Gaulle on this question. In essence, he nonetheless remained a Free Frenchman and a "*gaulliste critique*": a Gaullist, but with nuance (Simonin, 2022, p. 156). Consequently, this study reveals an unobserved angle to Aron's sociological thought and reaffirms his disputed credentials as a Gaullist in London.[1]

Raymond Aron's most striking articles from the war were republished in *Chroniques de guerre* (1990a), an anthology comprising three volumes. The first volume, '*From the Armistice to the National Insurrection*' (1944a/1990a), was only partly examined by Forneris (2022) in a recent essay discussing Aron's distinctive "history of the present" approach. This study will cover the articles from that volume which pertained to collaboration in wartime France. Aron's articles from the remaining two volumes instead concerned tyranny and the post-war.[2]

Without doubt, scholars have previously engaged with Aron's wartime articles, principally in relation to his evolving political outlook and to his Interwar or post-war scholarship. Because his articles from that period were numerous, they have not all been examined critically. To comprehend Aron's sociology of collaborators in its context, this study will mainly draw from two types of works on Aron. One kind—an intellectual history of Aron's life and thought—was spearheaded by Colquhoun (1986), Baverez (1993), and Stewart (2019). The other kind of works—which focused on a more specific facet, time period, or theme in Aron's thought—has been

[1] "[B]etween July 1940 and November 1942, Aron was often called a Vichyite by orthodox Gaullists" (Colquhoun, 1986, p. 217).

[2] See Aron (1945a/1990a; 1946/1990a); One of Aron's articles cited in this study is available in English (Aron, 1942c, d/1945b; Aron, 1943c/1945b); More of Aron's wartime texts can be found in records of *La France libre* (Hamish Hamilton,1940–1947) or via his bibliography (Simon & Dutartre, 1989/2015).

equally insightful on *La France libre* and wartime (Flood, 1993; Sirinelli, 1995; Oppermann, 2008; Drake, 2013; Bonfreschi, 2014; Aron, 2022; Simonin, 2022). Most relevantly, Curtis (2007) concisely paraphrased Aron's survey of several prominent collaborators (pp. 152–154). Memoirs by Aron (1983a/1990b), interviews of him (Aron, 1948; Gillois, 1973; Aron et al., 1981/1983b; Stark, 1986, pp. 245–270), or testimonies of French exiles who knew him (Cordier, 1985; Oberlé, 1945) also help inform this study. Nevertheless, no work has approached his wartime articles under this sociological angle. In turn, this study will start by introducing the background: Aron's political evolution from pacifism to resistance, the structuring of his sociological thought in the 1930s, and his responsibilities within the journal *La France libre* in London. Next, it will present the sociological underpinnings of his writings, outline the parameters of collaboration and how it was seen by French exiles at the time, and then summarize Aron's classification of integral and opportunistic categories of collaborators. Finally, it will continuously evaluate the political significance of his articles on collaboration.

Background

Abandoning Pacifism, Learning Sociology (1930–1940)

To wholly comprehend Raymond Aron's wartime analysis of collaborators, one must begin by highlighting the position he was speaking from and how he reached it. During and after his philosophy studies at the École normale supérieure in the 1920s, Aron had been a pacifist and had tentatively joined the French Worker's International (De Lapparent, 2010, p. 11). In his words, he was only "vaguely socialist" (Aron et al., 1981/1983b, p. 41). De Lapparent (2010) traced how Aron's perspective evolved while a scholar in Cologne and Berlin between 1930 and 1933, witnessing the rise of German National Socialism (pp. 17–20). He underlined Aron's attachment to European unity, complemented by pragmatism about the threat of war against France. Aron apparently renounced the intransigent pacifism advocated by the philosopher Alain, around 1932–1933 (Aron et al., 1981/1983b, p. 58). From January to August 1933, he experienced Adolf Hitler's Germany (Baverez, 1993, pp. 74, 81). "Starting in 1933, I considered reconciliation impossible, because Hitler's demands went beyond what we could grant, and consequently I thought we should not grant them", he remembered.[3] He became a soldier during the Second World War and then opted for exile in Great Britain, where the Free French regrouped. As Aron would underline in his wartime writings, having been a pacifist, an intellectual, or left-wing in the Interwar did not preclude others

[3] "À partir de 1933 j'ai considéré que la réconciliation était impossible, parce que les exigences de Hitler allaient au-delà de ce que l'on pouvait accorder et que par conséquent il ne fallait pas accorder" (Stark, 1986, p. 249). *n.b.* All translations from French are mine unless specified. Short French expressions with exact equivalents in English have been translated directly in-text.

from becoming collaborators—and he sought to pinpoint how some of his contemporaries arrived at that fateful position.[4]

Aron's time in 1930s Germany was equally instructive with respect to sociology. Baverez (1993) showed how the methods he learned would become part and parcel of his scholarship: "the man who came back in August 1933 was very different: he had read Marx and Weber, discovered Husserl and Heidegger; he brought back a work program which he would stick to during his whole life".[5] Afterwards, the French philosopher and sociologist Célestin Bouglé incited him to write *German Sociology* (Aron, 1935/1957), to follow in Émile Durkheim and Bouglé's career evolution after their own stays in Germany.[6] The resulting monograph covered a range of sociologists: Georg Simmel, Leopold von Wiese, Ferdinand Tönnies, Alfred Vierkandt, Othmar Spann, and Weber (Baverez, 1993, pp. 105–106). In this work, Aron highlighted a current of "systematic sociology" which enabled "to understand more fully the infinitely diverse relations between individuals … the existence of individual influences even in the most elaborate social constructions, and conversely the existence of collective influences in the most fugitive individual contacts" (1935/1957, p. 36, as cited in Colquhoun, 1986, p. 105). Aspects of systematic sociology were salient in Aron's wartime writings, alongside other sociological methods, as will be shown.

When the war began in late 1939, Raymond Aron was conscripted as a sergeant in a meteorology service and commanded a post until mid-June 1940 (Baverez, 1993, pp. 159–160). On June 22, 1940, the French State signed an armistice with Germany and sealed its military defeat. One day later, Aron decided to leave his academic career in France to go to Britain (Aron, 1983a/1990b, p. 114). There, he sensed that he could continue the war, as he "did not think that Churchill would deal with Hitler, or that he would accept defeat". Nor did Aron "have any illusions about [Philippe] Pétain's margins of manoeuvre and the discriminatory measures which the occupier would impose vis-à-vis Jews and opponents of Nazism".[7] Meanwhile in London, General Charles de Gaulle called for resistance against Germany and regrouped 7000 troops in the Free French Forces by mid-summer 1940 (Michel, 1967, pp. 8, 10–11, 18–19). De Gaulle's Free France came to represent "the French who were continuing to fight", in Aron's (1983a/1990b) words, contrary to the Vichy Regime led by Marshal Pétain in metropolitan France (p. 126).

[4] "For most French intellectuals, [a] gain of consciousness took place at the end of the 1930s, yet it was too late; for some, including several students of Alain, the loyalty toward pacifist ideals ended in collaboration". In French: "Pour la plupart des intellectuels français, [une] prise de conscience se fit à la fin des années trente, alors qu'il est trop tard; pour certains, dont plusieurs élèves d'Alain, la fidélité maintenue aux idéaux pacifistes s'acheva dans la collaboration" (Baverez, 1993, p. 89).

[5] "L'homme qui revint en août 1933 était très différent: il avait lu Marx et Weber, découvert Husserl et Heidegger; il rapportait un programme de travail auquel il devait se tenir sa vie durant" (Baverez, 1993, pp. 74, 79–80).

[6] *n.b.* For Colquhoun it "was the book which introduced the work of Max Weber to a French audience" (1986, pp. 99–101); Baverez (1993, pp. 105–106).

[7] "Aron était sans illusion sur les marges de manœuvre dont disposait Pétain et sur les mesures discriminatoires qu'imposerait l'occupant vis-à-vis des Juifs et des opposants au nazisme" (Baverez, 1993, p. 161).

The Journal *La France libre* and Aron's Stance (1940–1944)

Raymond Aron made his biggest mark as a Free Frenchman through literary means (Cordier, 1985, p. 26). At the beginning of his exile, he worked a desk job for a Free French company of tanks (Aron, 1983a/1990b, p. 117). Late in the summer of 1940, he was close to leaving on General de Gaulle's Dakar campaign, where it was possible to see combat firsthand (Aron, 1948, pp. 2–3). Aron also had the option to launch a journal with another French exile, André Labarthe, and he seized this opportunity. The journal was named *La France libre* ('*Free France*') (Aron, 1983a/1990b, pp. 117–118). De Gaulle encouraged the publication, offering Labarthe and Aron "all the help [he] could"—including funding (de Gaulle, 1954/1955, p. 158, as cited in Colquhoun, 1986, p. 230). Labarthe was a left-wing political figure who was at first preeminent within the Free French administration and in "excellent" terms with de Gaulle (Aron, 1983a, p. 170). Eventually, Labarthe grew uninvolved in the journal, and Aron assured he took on "a little more, I think, than the title of Editorial Secretary indicates" (Baverez, 1993, pp. 195–196).

The journal *La France libre* prospered in a time of animated political debate in London. Exiled French writers and political actors took part in peripheral resistance activities such as war propaganda, speeches to inform the Allied public, and printing their own newspapers. Although they shared a common enemy, these Frenchmen formed a heterogeneous group with affiliations ranging from socialist to the far-right (Michel, 1954, pp. 16–17; Michel, 1967, pp. 29–31, 33). They orbited around the official Free France governing organism, but frequently disagreed with its political line or with the policies of their British hosts: "We would fight nine days out of ten with the English … and the tenth day, when we had had a little respite, against the Germans".[8] In a sense, rival political currents were transposed from France to London, and the exiled French struggled to maintain a united front for a common cause.

Aron's articles in *La France libre* were far from being only concerned with internecine conflicts: they constituted a *tour-de-force* on political, sociological, and philosophical interrogations relating to the Second World War—alongside a myriad of topics. The variety of these texts was characteristic of his interdisciplinary approach. In this regard, he was likely spurred on by a rich and multicultural environment in London, where he reconnected for instance with the German sociologist Mannheim (Aron, 1983a/1990b, pp. 132–133). The painter Jean Oberlé, who wrote for the journal, affirmed it was "of all the monthly journals published in England, the one with the highest circulation. For a journal written in a foreign language, it was a success!"[9] Amid the variety of Aron's texts, this study will concentrate on the sociological facets.

[8] "Nous nous battions neuf jours sur dix avec les Anglais … et le dixième jour, quand nous avions un peu de répit, contre l'Allemand" (Michel, 1954, pp. 17, 20).

[9] "*La France Libre* était, de toutes les revues mensuelles paraissant en Angleterre, celle qui avait le plus fort tirage. Pour une revue rédigée dans une langue étrangère, c'était un succès!" (Oberlé, 1945, p. 104, as cited in Bachelier, 1990a, p. 371, Endnote 1); For details on the journal's circulation, see Stewart (2023, p. 15).

A Sociology of Collaborators

Raymond Aron assembled his sociological analysis of collaborators in a column called "Chronicles From France", which was anonymous and printed monthly (Aron, 1944a, p. 25, as cited in Drake, 2013, p. 385). To inform this column concerning current events in France, he read a great number of newspapers brought in from France, Germany, and Switzerland; he also met people who had been in metropolitan France and travelled to Britain (Cordier, 1985, p. 26; Forneris, 2022, p. 11). Aron prefaced his articles stating that "writing outside of France, I obviously wanted to explain the whole of France's reality" to the readership.[10] Curtis (2007) noted that Aron was "the first commentator to provide a comprehensive picture of the Vichy regime, its changing personnel and prevailing, sometimes contradictory ideas" (p. 152).

Sociological Underpinnings

Aron's articles on collaboration in *La France libre* take on additional meaning when studied in light of his research on *German Sociology* (1935/1957) and particularly with regard to Simmel and Weber. Incidentally, Aron's *German Sociology* was censored in France with more than one thousand other works on the first "Otto List" of forbidden books, decreed by the German occupier in September 1940 (Baverez, 1993, p. 106). Elements of systematic sociology and historical causality in general—which he defined in his monograph—were recognizable in the method of his wartime texts. For one, his chapter on systematic sociology, or "sociology of society (*Gesellschaftssoziologie*)", covered a specific sub-current named "formal sociology", led by Simmel and von Wiese (Aron, 1935/1957, pp. 3–5). Simmel's formal sociology, crucially, provided a framework that would have been applicable to studying individual collaborators and their paths. In Aron's words, the formal sociologist

> has a panoramic view of the lives of many individuals, under the categories of union or division, and his aim is to describe human groups and to analyze the processes through which society is created by individuals, and individuals are molded by the society they have made … The reduction of the whole to its elements is one of the theoretical principles of Simmel's method … Thus sociology discovers individuals in the crowd. (pp. 5–7).

Although Aron did not strictly replicate Simmel's method during the war, the spirit of systematic/formal sociology was arguably apparent in his writings. He was preoccupied with observing "how, why, and by what devious routes" certain Frenchmen entered collaboration with the German occupier (Aron, 1942c/1945b, 1942d/1945b, and 1943c/1945b, as cited in Sirinelli, 1995, p. 163).

In addition, one cannot understate the impact of Max Weber on Aron's thought. Weber straddled multiple currents and disciplines, and as such he benefited from his

[10] "Écrivant hors de France, j'étais évidemment désireux de faire comprendre l'ensemble de la réalité française" (Aron, 1944a, p. 25).

own chapter in Aron's (1935/1957, Chapter 3) monograph. "Max Weber is, without any doubt, the greatest of German sociologists", he claimed, having formulated "a sociology which is both historical and systematic" (p. 67). Weber was generally preoccupied in his writings with the question of "historical causality", which to him was "just as essential for analysing the motives which had led a mother to slap her child, as for determining the causes of capitalism" (pp. 79–80). Causality, as it will become clear throughout this study, was indispensable to grasping the reasons which led a collaborator to collaborate: could the cause be linked to their background, their ideas, their careerism, a mix of these factors, or even factors not considered here? Aron's summary of Weber's historical causality appears especially relevant. His historical causality consisted in

> the establishing of rules, not in the form of laws, but of frequent succession between two types of event (the influence of specific circumstances upon other specific circumstances); certain conditions facilitate, or in the most favourable case have as adequate effects, a certain type of behaviour … We have before us, therefore, a history which does not ignore irregularities and a sociology which does not eliminate either accidents, or ideas, or human strivings. (p. 81).

Within Aron's sociological writings, one could further explore a possible parallel with Weber's approach of "interpretative sociology", which looked at individuals and their "conscious procedures" in order "to understand social action … [and] explain its development and effects in causal terms" (Aron, 1935/1957, pp. 99–101). Weber's approach yielded a "classification of types of action"—although his four types were different from Aron's two categories of collaborators. On the one hand, Weber accounted for how individuals differently prioritize "means" and "ends", yielding the "*zweckrational*" and "*wertrational*" types. On the other hand, Weber also accounted for decision-making based on "*affektual*" or "traditional" factors.

Last, Weber is pertinent to analysing Aron's wartime sociology because Weber was a thinker situated at the nexus of "politics and science", where "science is conceived in such a way to make it indispensable for action … and politics is the more honest when it recognises that its origins are in desires and when it turns to science for clarification" (Aron, 1935/1957, pp. 67–68). Aron's wartime sociology inquired about an eminently political and polemical subject through a quasi-scientific lens. To be clear, this study does not attempt to reposition Aron within different sociological traditions than those conventionally established. It identifies the dispersed features of several sociological traditions mentioned in *German Sociology* within his wartime writings—texts which can arguably be added to his sociological corpus.

Collaboration as Seen from Exile

If interpreted together, approximately one-third of Aron's Chronicles From France articles in his first volume formed a typology of collaborators, evoking in its methodology his prior definitions of systematic sociology and historical causality more broadly. First, what counted as "collaboration"? Julian Jackson (2003), the historian of wartime France, underlined that collaboration featured in text from the beginning

of the occupation, in article 3 of the Armistice of 22 June 1940: French functionaries in the *zone occupée* ruled by Germany (as opposed to the *zone libre*, where the Vichy Regime would be established), had to "collaborate with [German military authorities]" (p. 167). Aron's articles covered collaborators in *both* zones of France who cooperated with and/or even zealously served Germany. From the first issue of *La France libre*, he began to identify and classify the various "categories of men" collaborating, discerning their underlying motives.[11] He repeatedly outlined their social and political backgrounds, their expressed convictions, and the responsibilities they wielded. His articles systematically made a distinction between those who were outwardly convinced of integral collaboration (a proactive and ideological collaboration) and those who seemingly collaborated out of opportunism.

Though initially, the integral collaborators cited by Aron tended to be located in Paris with the Germans, and the opportunists tended to be in Vichy with Pétain—a divide which Aron was visibly "careful to differentiate" (Curtis, 2007, pp. 150, 153)—any apparent divide blurred as the war progressed. Perceived nuances between collaborators diminished. One of the most prominent collaborators, Pierre Laval, went back and forth between Vichy and Paris. Today, historians know that apart from dissimilarities in vocabulary, "one should not … exaggerate the dichotomy between Vichy and Paris. Vichy often practised discreetly what the collaborationists [in Paris] preached vociferously" (Jackson, 2003, p. 192). Because Aron was in part informed by newspapers, he had to considerably rely on this vocabulary which was public, rather than on actions, for which the inner-workings were less known at the time. Interestingly, and perhaps as a result of this, Aron's distinction was not so much about differing degrees of collaboration that may have separated Paris and Vichy operators. It has since been established that Vichy "was united behind the need for some degree of voluntary collaboration" (Jackson, 2003, p. 167). His distinction was based upon the known differences in background, the variety of professed ideas, and the degrees of outward adherence to Nazi Germany's policies within one overarching world of collaboration.

To be sure, other French writers in Britain at the time also covered collaboration critically, alongside the Free Frenchmen who attacked collaboration in public speeches, spoken interventions on the BBC Radio, and official communications.[12] The historian Henri Michel summarized the dominant Free French opinion in late 1940 in this manner: "the condemnation of Vichy is formal … this government

[11] "Ajoutons encore deux catégories d'hommes ou deux sortes d'arguments" (Aron, 1940a/1990a, p. 31); *n.b.* He also covered the relation of some French writers to collaboration in three articles for *La France libre*. In particular, he discussed Jacques Chardonne, Pierre Drieu La Rochelle, Alfred Fabre-Luce, and Henry de Montherlant (Aron, 1942c, d/1990a & 1943c/1990a, pp. 521–55). And see Aron (1945b); *n.b.* He later said he would not have written these articles on Chardonne, Fabre-Luce, and Montherlant (Aron, 1983a, p. 205).

[12] A short but non-exhaustive list of examples of French writers from different political families exiled in London: Aron's own journal *La France libre* regularly mentioned Vichy and collaboration, with two notable articles by René Cassin on "A Coup d'État. The So-Called Constitution of Vichy" (1940-1941)–. Louis Lévy, a founder of the newspaper *France*, wrote a monograph on *The Truth about France* (1941), touching upon the military and political factors behind the advent of the Vichy Regime (as cited in R. A. [Aron], 1941c). The Catholic journal *Le Glaive de l'Esprit* quoted a speech by Maurice Schumann (the spokesman of Free France) in its first issue in December 1940, in which he denounced the Vichy Regime

willingly precipitated itself into collaboration … [and] betrayed the Allies".[13] Their opinion of Frenchmen who sided with the occupier more proactively was even more severe. One pertinent example of a French writer in Britain writing about collaboration was Pierre Tissier, a jurist and a lieutenant-colonel of the Free French Forces. In the Interwar, Tissier had been an *haut fonctionnaire*, as well as a secretary of Laval for over two years (Miller, 1943, p.102). He published four monographs in 1942 on questions relating to Vichy, including *The Government of Vichy*, which was written for both Francophone and Anglophone audiences. In two chapters about collaboration in Vichy, Tissier (1942) provided his personal insights (pp. 39–52). He focused mostly on the decisions and events forming Vichy's policy of collaboration, but offered his own interpretation of the motives of a few key individuals such as Laval, Pierre-Étienne Flandin, and Admiral François Darlan. He had chiefly known Laval to be an opportunist: "Laval was not specifically the champion of alliance with Germany; as a matter of fact a few years earlier he was merely the man of whatever alliance might best service his ambition" (p. 47). Flandin was "an apostle of Franco-German collaboration" (though short-lived), and Darlan was "a partisan of collaboration from ambition and egotism" (pp. 47–48). Two motives for collaboration were represented in such descriptions: one's political ideas, and opportunism. Broadly, however, Tissier saw operators of the Vichy Regime using collaboration "to satisfy their personal ambitions and pursue … the destruction of the democratic *régime* [preceding it]" (p. 52).

Aron's articles appeared before Tissier's writings (as early as November 1940), and then in parallel to them. He similarly discerned political ideas and opportunism as motives of collaboration, but he went further in extending his analysis from collaboration in Vichy to avid collaborators in the occupied zone. Aron was therefore not unique in discussing Vichy's collaboration, but his scope was holistic, and more importantly, his approach was distinctly sociological, probing over several years for causes, currents, and patterns. His sociological claims even aligned with later well-known theories by Sartre (1945b/2008) and Epstein (2008), as will be demonstrated.

Aron's claims were equally noteworthy for their political significance and are crucial to situating him. Indeed, as he exposed collaborators' profiles, he refuted their various motives to collaborate as fallacious. Even though his Chronicles From France were anonymously written, it was no small act for his journal to accuse Frenchmen of serving Nazi Germany and to suggest they were potentially traitors. Yet, he saw his work as indispensable to the extent that it revealed the

Footnote 12 (continued)
as fundamentally flawed because subordinated to "the will of the German dictator" ("la volonté du dictateur allemand") (Sword of the Spirit, 1940, pp. 2, 6). The successor to *Le Glaive de l'Esprit* was a journal called *Volontaire pour la Cité chrétienne*, in which the Editor-in-Chief spoke out in 1942 "Against the Anti-Semitism of Vichy", and published numerous other articles decrying collaboration (Closon, 1942, p. 4). Jacques Métadier's collection of *Solidarity* volumes included an article in its first issue on the subject of "Resistance to Oppression" and "Resistance in France", referring to "the existence of quislings and 'collaborationists'" across Europe ("Resistance to Oppression", 1942, pp. 15, 31–36).

[13] "La condamnation de Vichy est formelle … ce gouvernement s'est précipité de son plein gré dans la collaboration, donc dans la servitude … [il a] trahi les Alliés" (Michel, 1967, pp. 20–21).

reality of occupation. In January 1941, he stated in the journal: "No task is more important, for the Free French, than to denounce, behind this so-called German socialism, the real plutocracy of the German lords, and to reestablish the living unity of the national idea and the social idea".[14] Moreover, unlike many of the fervent de Gaulle supporters in London, Aron (1983a/1990b) believed at the beginning it was better for the collective "union of all the French" to offer some collaborators a chance of rallying the Allied camp, rather than "excommunicate" them (pp. 128–129). "Until November 1942, I thought that de Gaulle was wrong to make it more difficult for Vichyites to go over to the right side", he admitted.[15] Despite this originality, it is worth underlining that he stayed on the overall side of the Free French during his exile in London—a group led by a general who was a quasi-"dissident" in June 1940, who felt he embodied "France" itself, and who was sentenced to death in absentia by the Vichy Regime in August 1940 (Jackson, 2018, pp. 132, 157; Cassin, 1975, pp. 72, 77). This was by no means a minor political commitment.

Integral Collaborators: The Collaborationists

Starting his investigation of collaboration by looking at the Francophone press delivered in London, Raymond Aron (1981/1983b) "discovered that, even with a censored press like Vichy's, one can find out almost everything … [My] analyses were not all that inaccurate, given the information that I had at my disposal" (p. 83). In his Chronicles From France, his classification of collaborators progressed at the same time that the phenomenon of collaboration itself developed, following the establishment of the Vichy Regime in July 1940. From the first year of the war, Aron (1941d/1990a) mapped the political figures in France who actively embraced "tendencies" contrary to his own (p.129). These were "the partisans of integral collaboration, including [Marcel] Déat and his newspaper, and [Jacques] Doriot and his movement", he wrote in an article stretching in scope "From the Government of Notables to the Police State".[16] In several later texts, Aron (1943b, d, e/1990a) interchangeably used the term "collaborationist" to describe integral collaborators, a standard label in the literature on collaboration. He underlined these figures' backgrounds and their political tendencies, examining Déat in particular. While plainly

[14] "Parmi ceux que l'on appelle les hommes de Vichy, on peut distinguer quatre catégories … Aucune tâche n'est plus importante, pour les Français libres, que de dénoncer, derrière ce prétendu socialisme allemand, la réelle ploutocratie des seigneurs germaniques, de rétablir l'unité vivante de l'idée nationale et de l'idée sociale" (Aron, 1941a/1990a, pp. 54, 59).

[15] "Jusqu'à novembre 1942 je croyais que de Gaulle avait tort de rendre plus difficile aux vichystes de passer du bon côté" (Gillois, 1973, p. 101).

[16] "En fait de la politique extérieure, deux tendances également se heurtent … D'autre part, les partisans de la collaboration intégrale, dont Déat et son journal, Doriot et son mouvement" (Aron, 1941d/1990a, p. 129).

denouncing them, he categorized them with thoughtful precision, and not in a "Manichaean" way.[17]

Did integral collaborators have a common social or political background? In one article from May 1942 titled "Brought Into Line?", Aron highlighted that the leading French proponents of the Nazis' New Order ("*ordre nouveau*") sought "to speak only to defectors of all parties" in order to build their following:

> they call out to defectors of socialism [*transfuges du socialisme*] … They call out to defectors of the pacifism and internationalism of [Aristide] Briand … They call out to defectors of political romanticism … All of these men are traitors to their ideas as well as to their country."[18]

Aron used the word *transfuge* in the original French, which has an additional connotation that *defector* does not entirely capture. In the nineteenth-century French register, *transfuge* was primarily used for military defectors, or equally, "one who abandons his party to cross to the opposite party".[19] But in the twentieth century, *transfuge* increasingly became a term to also indicate a "person who changes milieu, or situation", or a "person who changes country, or location"—neither necessarily in a pejorative way.[20] Abiven and Véron (2023) suggested that novels such as *Les Déracinés* by Maurice Barrès (1897) and *L'Étape* by Paul Bourget (1902)—with characters transported from one social class to another—contributed to the concept of *transfuge* or "*transfuge de classe*" eventually gaining traction in the social sciences, namely in sociology (pp. 1, 3).

The way Aron employed *transfuge* in his article evoked a distinctly sociological meaning: integral collaborators who once belonged to a traditional socialist milieu, for example, moved to a pro-Nazi milieu. Pacifists and internationalists ended up working for bellicists and nationalists. Likewise, former political romantics were now supporting a sinister and defeatist enterprise, "forgetting that the cult of youth, action, and community … takes on an accent of tragic absurdity when it is preached in the abyss of servitude".[21] Though it was more of a comment on the political background of integral collaborators than on their social background, it was nonetheless a sociological observation: these political operators had left their usual milieu or political family. Sartre (1945b/2008) and his article "What is a Collaborator?" will subsequently feature in more depth in this study, but one notices an immediate parallel with Sartre's argument that "collaboration

[17] "Well, let me repeat to you a phrase from Malraux. 'It's true, politics is Manichaean' … We shouldn't overemphasize it" (Aron, 1981/1983b, p. 80).

[18] "Enfin, les collaborateurs s'adressent uniquement aux transfuges de tous les partis … Ils en appellent aux transfuges du socialisme … Ils en appellent aux transfuges du pacifisme et de l'internationalisme à la manière de Briand … Ils en appellent aux transfuges du romantisme politique … Tous ces hommes sont traîtres à leurs idées en même temps qu'à leur patrie" (Aron, 1942a/1990a, pp. 180–182).

[19] "2e Fig. Celui qui abandonne son parti pour passer dans le parti contraire" (Littré, 1874).

[20] "Personne qui change de milieu, de situation … Personne qui change de pays, de lieu" (CNRS & Université de Lorraine, n.d.).

[21] [E]n oubliant que le culte de la jeunesse, de l'action, de la communauté … prend un accent de tragique absurdité lorsqu'il est prêché dans l'abîme de la servitude" (Aron, 1942a/1990a, pp. 181–182).

is a phenomenon of disintegration … Initially, it represents a fixation by foreign collective forms of elements poorly assimilated by the indigenous community. It is in this respect akin to criminality and suicide, which are also phenomena of disassimilation" (pp. 44–45). Like Aron, Sartre referred to Déat and Doriot in his examples. The sociologist Patrick Baert (2015) noted that "Sartre drew on a Durkheimian view for he argued that, without being properly integrated within their own society, [collaborators] would hanker after a strong external force, hence the fascination with fascism" (pp. 83–85). Intriguing was Aron's subsequent prediction that integral collaborators might be able to "detach a part of the longstanding conservative and nationalist followers" of the Vichy Regime to join them.[22] By Aron's account, integral collaborators shared the common background of being *transfuges* originating from multiple political horizons.

Aron underscored that the political ideas of integral collaborators, regardless of their previous convictions, consisted in espousing the occupier's projects. Marcel Déat was the integral collaborator most discussed by Aron, in this respect. With an article from January 1941 titled "The New Regime. The Men and the Ideas", he retraced Déat's career steps from studying at the École normale supérieure and conducting research under Celestin Bouglé—exactly like himself—to entering politics and rallying Nazism (1941a/1990a, pp.57–58; Bachelier, 1990a, p. 376, Endnote 47). According to Aron, Déat transitioned from "intellectual socialism" in the early Interwar, to appeasement around the Munich Accords of 1938, and finally to endorsing Nazi ideology after the defeat of 1940. Building on his experience as a parliamentarian and minister in the 1930s, Déat founded the collaborationist National Popular Rally during the war (Jackson, 2003, pp. 192–193). Aron (1941a/1990a) summarized Déat's stance as primarily motivated by misguided economic socialism: in Déat's view, France needed to adopt a "totalitarian" system and integrate the German empire to fully facilitate a "central" planification of European economies (p. 58). In his May 1942 article, he recapitulated it as an inherently flawed theory envisioning "a single economic community which would impose everywhere the same regulation on prices and labor".[23] Déat's logic was to embrace the rule of German National Socialism and a Fichtean conception of one large, autarkic state as a means of attaining his main socialist objective for the French economy (pp. 180–181). In articles from May and August 1942, Aron refuted Déat's motive for integral collaboration as far-removed from "authentic socialism" because it entirely ignored or even sacrificed other essential tenets of socialism—namely liberty, equality, humane treatment of individuals, as well as a broader democratic awareness, and attachment

[22] "Les pseudo-révolutionnaires de Paris ne risquent guère de gagner au régime de Vichy des adhérents dans les masses populaires, mais ils pourraient bien en détacher une part des anciens adhérents, conservateurs et nationalistes" (Aron, 1942a/1990a, pp. 182–183).

[23] Aron paraphrasing Déat: "Le socialisme désire unir tous les États d'Europe et même du monde entier, dans une seule communauté économique qui imposerait partout la même règlementation des prix et du travail" (1942a/1990a, p. 180).

to the values of the French Revolution.[24] Déat's political evolution palpably infuriated Aron. From studying Déat's ideas and vocabulary, he concluded:

> such is this surprising intellectual immorality, where academic dialectic is put in the service of treason, where the old language of the pacifist and internationalist orders, from [Jean] Jaurès to Briand, are repeated for the profit of the most cynically imperialist project of modern times … Nothing is more worrisome, in the long term, than this link between the submission to Germany and the use, even usurped, of socialist ideology.[25]

The affiliation to intellectual socialism Déat had briefly shared with Aron in the Interwar had now long disappeared, as Déat spearheaded "fascist ultra-collaborationism" instead (Stewart, 2019, p. 45). As collaboration entered its third year, in August 1942, Aron (1942b/1990a) saw a danger in the political influence Déat exercised in Paris as a contributor to the newspaper *L'Œuvre* (pp. 211–212). Citing Déat's writings, he saw Déat as a self-proclaimed spokesperson for Laval's Vichy government as of April 1942. As fate would have it, Déat became the Minister of Labor for Vichy in the spring of 1944.[26]

Aron was precocious in highlighting Déat's strange conversion to integral collaboration. Decades after, the historian Simon Epstein (2008) iterated an analogous diagnosis in '*A French Paradox*' and provided more details on Déat's background. The paradox about Déat was that his socialism and pacifism radicalized into an endorsement of Nazi Germany's ambitions, like for many fellow collaborators (pp. 17, 196–207). Moreover, surprisingly, "many ministers of Vichy [including Déat] are former philo-Semites … Take a pacifist of the 1920s and 1930s, take a non-Jewish orator from one of the big meetings of the LICA: they are moving in their sincere philo-Semitism, but the probability is high enough that they are found, in turn, on the wrong side of the barricade".[27] By 1942, Déat—who had once appeared philo-Semitic—was definitively anti-Semitic (pp. 196–201). He criticized a Jewish "domination" over French economy, culture, and politics as menacing to

[24] "[E]n oubliant que le socialisme authentique n'a vu dans l'économie dirigée qu'un moyen de réaliser une communauté plus égale et plus humaine" (Aron, 1942a/1990a, pp. 180–181); "De plus, les partis d'extrême gauche en France n'ont jamais séparé la liberté du progrès social. Jamais ils n'ont cédé à la tentation d'identifier leur doctrine avec une simple réorganisation de l'économie, en oubliant l'idéal d'émancipation d'humaine qui anime le socialisme authentique" (Aron, 1942b/1990a, pp. 214–215).

[25] "M. Marcel Déat, est, en France, le dernier produit du socialisme intellectuel … Tel est cet étonnant dévergondage intellectuel, où la dialectique universitaire est mise au service de la trahison, où les anciens mots d'ordre pacifistes et internationalistes, de Jaurès à Briand, sont repris au profit de l'entreprise la plus cyniquement impérialiste des temps modernes … Rien n'est plus redoutable, à longue échéance, que cette liaison entre la soumission à l'Allemagne et l'emploi, même usurpé, de l'idéologie socialiste" (Aron, 1941a/1990a, pp. 57–59).

[26] For more on Déat in this period, see Jackson (2003, pp. 200, 213, 530, 567–569).

[27] LICA: *Ligue international contre l'antisémitisme*, known today as LICRA or the International League Against Racism and Antisemitism; "Les ministres de Vichy, pour beaucoup, sont d'anciens philosémites … Prenez un pacifiste des années 1920 et 1930, prenez un orateur non-juif d'un des grands meetings de la LICA: ils sont bouleversants de philosémitisme sincère, mais la probabilité est assez élevée qu'on les retrouve, par la suite, du mauvais côté de la barricade" (Epstein, 2008, p. 17).

"European 'kinship'".[28] Nazi Germany's project was Déat's new project, and his prioritization of German economic dirigisme overrode any previous apparent concern for social policy.

Aron thus focused on Marcel Déat's political background and ideas as an example for his inquiry into integral collaborators and entered a dialogue of ideas to explain why his ideology was misled or incoherent. Aron (1935/1957) had written earlier in *German Sociology* that "the social *par excellence* can be understood either by the analysis of interpersonal events or by the intuition of wholes. Sociology, like philosophy, tends towards analysis or towards synthesis. A microscopic and macroscopic view" (p. 4). Here, he manifestly took a microscopic view of Déat's ideas and interpersonal developments to build the larger category of integral collaborators, evoking this systematic sociology. The circumstances and reasons that caused integral collaborators to opt for such a path were also reminiscent of Weber's historical causality: Aron identified them as *transfuges* of their milieu or their party, who rallied proactive collaboration with the certainty of converts. In turn, Aron's sociology served to both outline the intellectual errors of integral collaborators and, by contrast, to reassert the political need for resistance. When collaboration escalated in November 1942 and metropolitan France was completely occupied by the enemy, he unequivocally denounced the integral collaborators remaining as "a group of traitors and a handful of fanatics".[29]

Opportunistic Collaborators: The *Attentistes*

With an article titled "Material Reconstruction and Moral Atmosphere" published in December 1940, Aron distinguished the other category of collaborators: the "opportunists".[30] He interchangeably used the label "*attentistes*" to designate these collaborators—in the sense that they collaborated with the occupier in their acts, but they would "wait-and-see" on the winning outcome of the war before vocally endorsing either side.[31] In the wake of the defeat, Aron was less reproachful of some of these collaborators because he thought that, for the most part, the Armistice of June 1940 concluded by "Pétain seemed to me to be the expression of the dominant feelings of the majority of Frenchmen" (Aron et al., 1981/1983b, p. 67). Still, the Armistice was not the policy he was personally invested in, since he thought it wiser to instead support Great Britain at war. In one of his first London articles, titled "The Capitulation" and published in November 1940, Aron wrote that the attempt to "compromise with the victor" and minimize harm done was actually a "double error: the more they debase themselves, the

[28] "Déat retourne en lice en août 1942 … Il précise d'abord … 'comment les juifs dispersés … n'ont cessé d'être tourmentés du même et permanent désir de domination' … Dans un troisième article, il proclame que … 'le sentiment d'une 'parenté' européenne doit se développer'" (Epstein, 2008, pp. 196–199, 202–203).

[29] "Dès lors, on peut le dire, il ne subsiste plus qu'une bande de traîtres et une poignée de fanatiques pour s'accrocher les uns à la fictive collaboration, les autres au mythe de la neutralité" (Aron, 1943a/1990a, p. 255).

[30] "Certes, les convertis, les opportunistes ne manquent pas" (Aron, 1940b/1990a, p. 52).

[31] "D'une part, les 'attentistes' dont Maurras, avec sa conception de la neutralité … ceux qui, à Vichy, reculent devant les conséquences extrêmes de l'armistice" (Aron, 1941d/1990a, p. 129); See Colquhoun (1986, p. 252).

more they will be trampled, because their masters despise them in proportion to their servility".[32] While sketching the sociological profile of these opportunistic collaborators, he proceeded to show the readers the flaws in their motives for collaboration, and continued to reinforce the resistant stance of the journal *La France libre*.

For Aron, the common thread reuniting these opportunistic collaborators was that they above all perceived an opportunity to advance their own careers while attempting to preserve their original political ideas (which was not to say integral collaborators such as Marcel Déat and Jacques Doriot were not careerists). In November 1940, he observed how "in historic catastrophes, the ambitions of individuals let loose with sometimes even more violence as the future of the community appears darker".[33] He noted that the socio-professional backgrounds of the influential Frenchmen who accepted defeat and then entered this form of opportunistic collaboration were varied: senior military officers, members of the lower to upper bourgeoisie, politicians of the Third Republic—there was not a sole profession that pre-disposed them (pp. 30–32, 38). As for their ideas, the opportunistic collaborators underlined here by Aron differed from integral collaborators insofar as they did not overtly share the ideology of the occupier. He observed a convergence in the political stances expressed by these figures: they generally tended to be "reactionaries" or "conservatives", and they tended to fear anarchy or a Communist "revolution". Officials in Pétain's Vichy Regime and the writer Charles Maurras were the most frequent examples Aron gave for the category of opportunists throughout his wartime writings.

Aron's (1990a) article from January 1941 on "The New Regime. The Men and the Ideas", cited earlier, closely described a reactionary-traditionalist current existing among these opportunistic collaborators (pp. 54–55). This current specifically aimed to use the defeat to restore a French monarchic system, recenter Catholicism in society, and make its ideas come through. He named Vichy officials such as the Minister of Justice Raphaël Alibert, indicating Alibert "thinks that we are at a decisive turning point in history. He hopes to inflect its course in the direction of a Catholic community, of the medieval type".[34] To him, these men sought power first and foremost, and aimed to entirely repel the political system of the Third Republic (pp. 56–57). Unlike the integral collaborators, Aron noticed here they refused to explicitly identify with Nazism—or any totalitarian ideology for that matter—since these ideologies would be incompatible with their reactionary beliefs and with Catholicism (p. 61). Writing about "The Government of Notables" in March 1941, Aron assessed

[32] "[L]es chefs actuels de Vichy partagent probablement une illusion: ils pensent réserver l'avenir en cherchant des compromis avec le vainqueur … Ils commettent une double erreur: plus ils s'abaisseront et plus ils seront piétinés, car leurs maîtres les méprisent en proportion de leur servilité" (Aron, 1940a/1990a, p. 38).

[33] "Dans les catastrophes historiques, les ambitions des individus se déchaînent parfois avec d'autant plus de violence que l'avenir de la communauté paraît plus sombre" (Aron, 1940a/1990a, p. 31).

[34] His list of Vichy ministers included but was not limited to: Albert Rivaud, Émile Mireaux, Georges Ripert, and Jacques Chevalier (successive ministers of Education), Paul Baudouin (Foreign Minister and then, at the time, Governmental Secretary). "[Alibert] pense que nous sommes à un tournant décisif de l'histoire. Il espère en infléchir le cours dans la direction d'une communauté catholique, de type médiéval" (Aron, 1941a/1990a, pp. 54–57).

that the resulting Vichy Government, formed in part by members of this reactionary-traditionalist current, was an "authoritarian regime".[35] He described how these Vichy officials, who were fearful of revolutionary movements, started their National Revolution program (*Révolution nationale*)—which was in fact a "'top-down' revolution", done without the contest of the French masses.[36] He pointed out that this so-called revolution began with the exclusion of free-masons, left-wing politicians, and Jewish people from French political and economic life (p. 80).

Aron's (1942b/1990a) article titled "The Political Comedy", published over one year later, stressed that another core belief in this reactionary-traditionalist current was the theory of "neutrality" (p. 215). He recapitulated this supposed neutrality theorized by Maurras and pointed to the fallacies of its attempt to further justify their collaboration. He criticized Maurras and his neutrality for "putting on the same plane, despite all intellectual honesty, those who continue the fight alongside the Allies and those who make themselves the agents of the enemy, an absurd assimilation which permits oneself to have the monopoly on patriotism". In short, he contended, the reactionary-traditionalists were content with a monarchical form of power projected by Marshal Pétain, and they engaged in collaboration while pretending to approve neither the Allies nor Germany, so as to join whichever winning side at the end of the war.[37]

In May 1942, Aron (1942a/1990a) reported in "Brought Into Line?" that more fervent and integral collaborators—led by Laval—had overtaken the opportunistic collaborators that spring to dominate the Vichy Regime (p. 182). This was, in his eyes, the triumph of "resolute agents of the enemy … the threat of a definitive disappearance of what was left of French elements in the ideology and personnel of Vichy".[38] One category of collaborators prevailed over another for a short time, but in an article in June 1943, he predicted they would all inevitably be overcome by the "wave of victory" at Allied liberation.[39] Aron's investigation into opportunistic collaborators exposed those who collaborated with the German occupier *despite* Nazi ideology being seemingly contrary to their beliefs. The opportunists would have been driven by sheer personal gain and political ambition.

It is striking how Jean-Paul Sartre (1945b/2008) drew similar sociological insights in a renowned article called "What is a Collaborator?", published in August 1945. Upon his return to Paris, Aron had given his former classmate Sartre a volume of *La France libre* issues to read from the second half of 1941, in which at least one of Aron's articles directly pertained to the sociology of collaborators (Aron, 1983a, p. 173). This was

[35] "Le régime qui s'est institué en France depuis l'armistice est donc un régime autoritaire" (Aron, 1941b/1990a, p. 77).

[36] "La Révolution nationale, que l'on a proclamée au lendemain de la défaite, est une révolution 'par en haut'" (Aron, 1941b/1990a, p. 78).

[37] "Un des disciples de Maurras, Thierry Maulnier, a tenté d'approfondir cette doctrine de la neutralité … Maurras essaie … en mettant sur le même plan, en dépit de toute honnêteté intellectuelle, ceux qui continuent la lutte aux côtés des Alliés et ceux qui se font les agents de l'ennemi, assimilation absurde qui permet de se réserver à soi-même le monopole du patriotisme" (Aron, 1942b/1990a, p. 215).

[38] "Dès lors, l'arrivée au pouvoir de Laval … [marque] le remplacement de collaborateurs encore hésitants, par des agents résolus de l'ennemi … la menace d'une définitive disparition de ce qui restait d'éléments français dans l'idéologie et le personnel de Vichy" (Aron, 1942a/1990a, p. 182).

[39] "La boue que la lame de fond de la défaite avait fait remonter à la surface, la vague de la victoire la balaiera" (Aron, 1943e/1990a, pp. 307–308).

the article where he distinguished integral collaborators from opportunists (see Aron, 1941d/1990a, pp. 129–138). Sartre himself wrote for *La France libre* from France in November 1944.[40] He then reviewed fifty *La France libre* issues in January 1945 for *Combat*: "the journal, on the whole, presents to us what we demanded so much from the Nazi newspapers during four years: an explanation of our time".[41] Later that year, Sartre's (1945b/2008) article "What is a Collaborator?" exhibited a comparable sociological concern and offered comparable conclusions. While Aron's wartime sociology bore traits of Simmel and Weber, Sartre's method was, according to Baert (2015), "Durkheimian both in terms of explanation and vocabulary" (p.83). Still, it was similarly a "socio-psychological" examination of the profiles of French collaborators during the war (and, to a lesser extent, an examination of collaborators in general) (pp. 82–87). Most of all, Sartre (1945b/2008) discerned an opportunism among right-wing figures which resembled uncannily the one described by Aron years earlier:

> it is in this way that we can explain this curious paradox: the majority of collaborators were recruited from among what have been dubbed 'Right-wing anarchists' … they kept up, on the margins of actual society, the dream of an authoritarian society into which they could merge … If the collaborators concluded from the Germany victory that it was necessary to subject themselves to the authority of the Reich, this was because they had already taken a profound, original decision that formed the bedrock of their personality: the decision to bow to the fait accompli, whatever it may be. (pp. 48, 51–52).

Simone de Beauvoir read the journal as well and was strongly impacted, adding to the possibility Sartre drew inspiration from Aron's wartime articles for his own theory on collaboration. In late 1944, "when [Aron] emerged one morning at the Café de Flore, we fell into each other's arms … He lent me the collection of *La France libre* issues and I deciphered the war not from the perspective of Paris but from the point of view of London … I had been living in a prison; now the world was restored to me".[42]

Aron's sociology of opportunistic collaborators was indeed a revealing project, and it publicly contested their misinformed or cynical pretexts for collaboration. He lucidly understood that Nazi Germany exploited collaborators precisely to pursue its hegemonic plans (Aron, 1941a, pp. 62–63). Returning to Aron's (1935/1957) work on the fundamentals of systematic sociology, one notices a parallel in the methods and conclusions drawn: "Simmel regarded crowds … not as superior beings, but as monstrous realities created blindly by men as a result of the collective life itself. In order to judge our civilization, he analyses human behaviour and men's relations with each other … [A] double antinomy, that between atomism and holism and that between

[40] Sartre's article was called "Paris sous l'Occupation", published in *La France libre*, *9*(49), 9–19. See Sirinelli (1995, p. 205).

[41] "[L]a revue, dans son ensemble, nous présente ce que, pendant quatre ans, nous avons tant réclamé contre les mensonges des journaux nazis: une explication de notre temps" (Sartre, 1945a, p. 2).

[42] "Raymond Aron … quand il surgit un matin au Café de Flore nous tombâmes dans les bras l'un de l'autre" (Baverez, 1993, p. 197); See Colquhoun (1986, p. 242, Endnote 88).

individualism and the rule of the masses" (p. 8). To compose the category of opportunistic collaborators, Aron inspected individual backgrounds and behaviours. He then synthesized how these factors converged, leading opportunistic collaborators to volunteer for a system of collaboration simultaneously instrumentalizing them. Aron's category also posed questions of historical causality. These collaborators' backgrounds were varied, and if some certainly congregated around similar ideas, these ideas were not strictly homogeneous either (i.e. reactionary, conservative, anti-anarchy, and anti-Communist ideas). Hence the common denominator of collaboration as a choice supposedly made to advance their respective careers or ideas. A plurality of causes which lead to a singular choice. As Aron demonstrated, such opportunism could easily be contradicted as naïve, ignorant, or wilfully ignorant. Around the same time Aron was writing his articles, de Gaulle stated "there cannot be renovation for a people in chains" (with reference to the National Revolution), and "the so-called reforms [of Vichy] are but poisonous trickeries—mushrooms growing on the rot of the disaster".[43] Meanwhile, Aron maintained faith in the French masses and their desire to resist the Vichy Regime, thinking they perceived it as "an instrument of the enemy" like he did.[44]

With respect to politics, as mentioned, Aron did somewhat differ from de Gaulle on the subject of the opportunistic collaborators, betting that in spite of their fallacious choices, some could still be amenable to resisting (ironically, this would have proven their opportunism). Almost forty years after the fact, he recounted how he "obstinately retained the vague hope that once the Allies arrived in North Africa … a good part of the Vichy government, or of the forces linked to Vichy, would make contact with the Allies and resume the war at their side … It was desirable to avoid civil war through a reconciliation at the right moment between the French" (Aron et al., 1981/1983b, p. 73). These political hopes did not fully materialize once the Allies landed in North Africa in November 1942 (Aron, 1983a/1990b, p. 126). One final political matter often raised is that Aron did not devote extensive time to the anti-Semitism of collaborators in his Chronicles From France articles (Drake, 2013, p. 386). Part of his explanation was that the collaborators' anti-Semitism seemed blatant to him (Aron, 1983a/1990b, pp. 120–122). Partly, he was also self-conscious about his place at the time: "in London, I was considered too indulgent toward the Vichy government; this indulgence was explained away as overcompensation by a Jew, who could not be other than anti-Vichy. Some people realized that it was simply my style. In general, I prefer to understand and analyze my adversaries rather than vituperate them" (Aron et al., 1981/1983b, pp. 83–84, 86–87). Aron considered these two political matters to be the main shortcomings of his articles; nevertheless, there can be no doubt as to his opposition to Vichy's collaboration, considering his investigation and refutation of opportunistic collaboration.

[43] "Il ne peut pas y avoir de rénovation pour un peuple dans les chaînes … Les soi-disant réformes ne sont que de vénéneuses tromperies, des champignons poussés sur la pourriture du désastre" (Michel, 1967, pp. 21–22).

[44] "[Les Français] résistent *simultanément* à la collaboration avec l'Allemagne hitlérienne et au despotisme bureaucratique et policier de Vichy dans lequel ils voient une imitation et un instrument de l'ennemi" (Aron, 1942b/1990a, p. 214).

Conclusion

Raymond Aron (1935/1957) wrote in *German Sociology* that "German sociologists would probably all accept Weber's statement that a statistical relationship, however well established, does not satisfy our curiosity and that we desire to *understand* the link between motives and the act, which will explain human behaviour and the statistical relation itself" (p. 109; emphasis is his). Little over five years later, a desire to *understand* was visibly at the heart of his wartime sociological writings. Using sociological methods, he revealed, categorized, and then countered two main categories of collaborators during the Second World War, as illustrated with his Chronicles From France for the journal *La France libre*. An old maxim in the French language claims that "*tout comprendre, c'est tout pardonner*". Aron understood collaboration, but precisely because he understood it, he could not forgive it.

His approach uncovered the profiles and the ideological motivations (or lack thereof) of the Frenchmen working with the enemy. In its method, it evoked the systematic sociology or historical causality he researched in the 1930s. In the same way, Forneris (2022) proved he wrote a "history of the present" on the defeat of 1940 and the French-German divide, one can affirm Aron wrote a sociology of present collaboration. Remarkably, he identified these collaborators at an early stage of the war, from afar in Great Britain, and thanks to printed or oral sources he gathered. His findings also may have inspired Sartre's (1945b/2008) article on "What Is a Collaborator?" and they anticipated an argument at the core of Epstein's (2008) '*A French Paradox*'.

Undoubtedly, Aron's categories were porous to an extent and non-exhaustive. Integral collaborators were opportunistic in their own way, even if it was secondary to ideological motivation. Conversely, some opportunistic collaborators in Vichy showed themselves to be much more sympathetic to the occupier in their ideas than they initially projected. Finally, it is unclear where Aron would have placed Marshal Pétain in his categories of collaborators, since Pétain employed both kinds of collaborators in his Vichy governments but could not easily fit a "type"—his individual case having no equivalent. Aron's distinction between integral and opportunistic motives of collaboration approximately stands the test of time and was not necessarily revolutionary in and of itself. It was evident that in the world of collaboration, there were larger and smaller degrees of sympathy expressed toward Nazi Germany's policies, often demarcated around the Paris-Vichy line. For example, some "collaborationists, who were based mainly in Paris … attacked Vichy for not going far enough, and mocked Maurras's affection of agnosticism about Germany" (Jackson, 2003, pp. 140–141). What was unique to Aron was his sociological angle in uncovering their backgrounds and motives, as well as his prescient theoretical interpretations—all of which were formulated with limited knowledge, resources, and with no benefit of hindsight. Though imperfect, Aron's sociology of collaborators permitted him to methodically dissect a puzzling phenomenon and deliver a coherent picture of it for his readers. Observing Aron's wartime articles under this lens adds a new layer of writings to his already considerable lifetime sociological work.

Since then, the historian Ian Kershaw (1993) wrote an authoritative thesis on the "dynamic" of power in Nazi Germany in "Working Towards the Führer". His thesis can prompt reflection on more general implications of Aron's inquiry into collaboration. Kershaw argued that, at a similar epoch, numerous people working for Hitler in

Germany saw "opportunities" to push their own agenda, on condition their agenda was not implausibly distant from Hitler's ideology:

> as *activator* [and "*enabler*"], the 'vision' embodied by Hitler served as a stimulant to action in the different agencies of the Nazi Movement itself, where pent-up energies and unfulfilled social expectations could be met by activism carried out in Hitler's name … [B]eyond the movement, it also spurred initiatives … [T]he motif of 'national redemption' could offer an open door to the push for realisation of long-cherished ambitions felt to have been held back or damaged by the Weimar 'system' … [It] offered free licence to initiatives which, unless inopportune or counter-productive, were more or less guaranteed sanction from above. (pp. 113–115).

Kershaw's thesis applied in range from convinced inner-circle ideologues to lower-level "functionaries" and broader swathes of society (pp. 114, 117). Like the collaborators in France described by Aron, the Germans described by Kershaw worked for the regime either in a "direct" or "in a more indirect sense where ideological motivation was secondary, or perhaps even absent altogether" (p. 117). The political circumstances in occupied France and in Germany at the time were different, and the influence wielded by officials in each regime had different effects, but the dynamic Kershaw described corresponded. Whether officials tried to allegedly temper or conversely radicalize the policies of the regime, they supported policies in a direction convenient to their goals. Timeless trademarks of collaboration or servitude in authoritarian systems are the accompanying justificative tropes: "better in than out", "changing the system from the inside", "being the adult in the room", "making one's voice heard".

In the political context of the period, Aron diverged from wartime Gaullism in not discounting certain opportunistic collaborators from one day joining Free France and the Allies in resistance. He only kept this hope until the pivot of late 1942. With hindsight, he explained his reasoning: "I was persuaded there would be a landing in North Africa", and such landing would be an opportunity for Vichyites to merge forces with the Allies. "As long as the fate of North Africa was not decided, one had to give a chance to the government of Vichy and not claim legitimacy [over the French] too early". However, "retrospectively, I was rather wrong than right".[45] The bet he made was, by his admission, mostly fruitless, but it was meant to unite all of the French, not divide the Free French (Baverez, 1993, p. 167). In addition, Aron's journal *La France libre* had the real potential to sway readers abroad, with some of the journal's articles secretly sent to France (Soutou, 1990a, pp. 5–6; Baverez, 1993, p. 180).

This study therefore presented Raymond Aron's "comprehensive intellectual portrait of the Vichy regime" in its sociological and political dimensions (Curtis, 2007, p. 171). While Aron's sociological analyses were better-achieved, his momentary hopes for the political redemption of some collaborators must not detract from his broader support for Gaullism, as critical it may have been (Baverez, 1993, p. 177). Furthermore, as Aron's fellow exile, Jean Oberlé emphasized: "*all* the French people

[45] "Rétrospectivement, j'ai eu plutôt tort que raison … J'étais persuadé qu'il y aurait un débarquement en Afrique du Nord … Aussi longtemps que le sort de l'Afrique du Nord n'était pas réglé, il fallait laisser sa chance au gouvernement de Vichy et ne pas revendiquer trop tôt la légitimité" (Gillois, 1973, p. 101).

who crossed the sea and came to England after the Armistice of June 1940 were, without exception, profoundly and sincerely opposed to the government of Vichy and to the despicable policy of collaboration".[46]

Declarations

Ethics Approval This study complies with ethical standards. No ethical approval was required for this study.

Consent to Participate No demand of consent to participate was required for this study.

Consent for Publication No demand of consent to publish was required for this study.

Competing Interests The author declares no competing interests.

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[46] "Il faut d'abord bien comprendre ceci: *tous* les Français qui avaient passé la mer et étaient venus en Angleterre après l'armistice de juin 1940, étaient sans exception, profondément et sincèrement opposés au gouvernement de Vichy et à l'infâme politique de collaboration". Emphasis is his (Oberlé, 1945, p. 104).

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